

As hard times continue for black residents, many moving away

 chicagobusiness.com/greg-hinz-politics/hard-times-continue-black-residents-many-moving-away

Greg Hinz

December 4, 2018

1. [Home](#)
2. [Greg Hinz On Politics](#)

Greg Hinz On Politics

December 06, 2018 06:00 AM

A new CMAP analysis of census data suggests that African-Americans badly lag other groups in economic growth and are leaving metro Chicago in response.

On Politics

[Print](#)



Crain's illustration/Getty Images

Increasingly disconnected from regional prosperity, black residents of the metropolitan area are responding with their feet—literally—and moving out of the region to other corners of America.

That's the bottom line of a [new analysis of U.S. Census Bureau data by the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning](#), the federally chartered agency that coordinates local spending on roads, transit and other infrastructure here and which regularly reports on how we're doing compared to other metros.

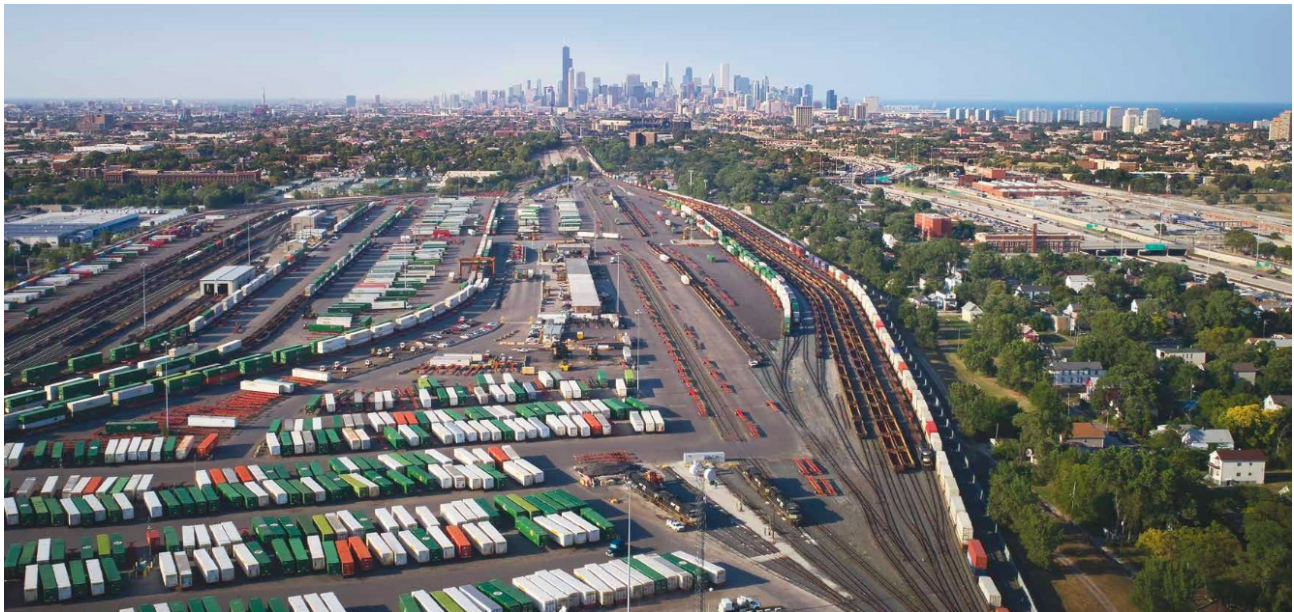
Building off of its new On To 2050 long range plan, which concluded that lack of progress among people of color and particularly African-Americans is holding back the entire region, CMAP took a look at recently released 2017 American Community Survey data and compared it with figures from 2010.

It concluded that, as has been widely reported in earlier reports, the recovery here has been "slow and lagging behind many peer metropolitan areas." But the lag among black residents is particularly striking.

For instance, while the unemployment rate in the region dropped from 9 to 7.6 percent overall, among blacks it dipped just four-tenths of a percentage point, or 0.4 percent. That's significantly smaller than the drops among Latinos, Asians and non-Hispanic whites, even though the unemployment rate was and remains far higher among blacks, more than 17 percent.

Similarly, median household income among blacks is still off nearly a tenth—9.4 percent—among blacks. In comparison, among whites, the drop was 1.5 percentage points; among Hispanics, 4.2 percentage points, with Asians gaining a bit. And while the drop-off in labor force participation rates was smallest among blacks in the 2010-17 period compared to other groups, blacks already had and still have the lowest rate, with just over 60 percent holding a job or actively looking for one.

Earlier



Metro Chicago held back by racial, ethnic disparities, regional plan declares

The result: African-Americans are leaving, while the population of whites, Latinos and Asians is up, if only modestly so. Those findings had been previously reported, but in its new report CMAP breaks it out by those with and without jobs, and some of the data is eyebrow-raising.

Among non-Hispanic whites, Asians and Latinos age 16 to 64, a clear majority of 53 percent to 64 percent, respectively, of those leaving the region already hold jobs. But among blacks, only 42 percent are employed. The remaining 58 percent of those moving either are unemployed or out of the workforce and not looking at all.

CMAP Associate Policy Analyst Aseal Tineh said there could be various reasons for the latter distinctions, such as more rapid aging among white residents. But overall, it's likely that African-Americans here are having a harder time finding jobs, and a harder time getting jobs that pay well, she said. Beyond that, the report itself notes previous research that black commuters tend to have a longer trip to work than other area residents.

The report adds that "stark" differences among departing groups and their employment status "suggest that economic factors play a more significant role in encouraging the out-migration of the region's black residents" than other groups.

Overall, about 1.13 million people age 16 to 64 left the region in the seven-year period, and 750,000 moved in from other areas. Most of the latter were employed. "The in-migration of workers suggests that the Chicago area is attracting talent to the region," but has trouble retaining it, the report says.

The new data matters because, above and beyond the obvious equity concerns, the region's workforce continues to shift toward people of color, and if they don't do well, neither will the metropolitan area as a whole.

Between 2010 and 2017, the share of the workforce here that was white dropped 2.9 percentage points, to 56.7 percent. The black share was about flat, with growth among Latinos

and Asians.

Letter

to the

Editor

Have something to get off your chest? You can [send us an email](#). Or tell us on our [Facebook](#) page or on [Twitter](#), @CrainsChicago.

Recommended for You

[Sponsored Content: Modern Meets Vintage In East Lakeview](#)

